

Acknowledgement

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- Adelaide North Eastern Division of General Practice Group, incorporating:
 - Adelaide North East Division of General Practice
 - Northern Division of General Practice
 - Mid North Rural Division of General Practice
 - Yorke Peninsula Division of General Practice
- Canning Division of General Practice Group, incorporating
 - Canning Division of General Practice
 - Perth and Hills Division of General Practice, and
 - Easter Goldfields Medical Division of General Practice
 - Fremantle Regional Division of General Practice (GP Network)
- Hunter Urban Division of General Practice
- Northern Tasmania Division of General Practice (GP North)
- South East NSW Division of General Practice Group, incorporating
 - South East NSW Division of General Practice
 - ACT Division of General Practice
 - Riverina Division of General Practice
- Southern Metropolitan Region Divisions of General Practice (Melbourne) incorporating,
 - Monash Division of General Practice
 - Greater South Eastern Division of General Practice
 - Mornington Peninsula Division of General Practice
 - Dandenong and District Division of General Practice
 - Eastern Ranges Division of General Practice
 - South City Division of General Practice (GP Services), and
 - Central Bayside Division of General Practice
- Townsville Division of General Practice

ADGP would like to acknowledge the following divisions of general practice and State Based Organisations who participated in the Demonstration Divisions on Nursing in General Practice National Workshops and contributed to the body of knowledge and experience of divisions of general practice to support nursing in general practice.

Alliance of NSW Divisions	North West Melbourne	Capricornia
Central Sydney	Northern Melbourne	South Australian Divisions Inc.
Eastern Sydney	Whitehorse	Adelaide Western
South Eastern Sydney	Greater South Eastern	Adelaide Northern
Bankstown	Monash	Adelaide North East
Western Sydney	Central Bayside	Adelaide Central & Eastern
Northern Sydney	Knox	Adelaide Southern
St George	Dandenong & District	Barossa
Liverpool	Eastern Ranges	Yorke Peninsula
Hornsby Ku-Ring-Gai Ryde	Mornington Peninsula	Mid North Rural SA
Sutherland	GP Association of Geelong	Riverland
Macarthur	Central Highlands	Eyre Peninsula
Illawarra	Central-West Gippsland	Murray Mallee
Hunter Urban	Otway	Adelaide Hills
Hunter Rural	Ballarat & District	Perth – Perth and Hills from 1/7/02
Shoalhaven	Bendigo & District	Perth Central Coastal
South East NSW	Goulburn Valley	Osborne
Port Macquarie	East Gippsland	Canning
Mid North Coast (NSW)	Border	Fremantle Regional
Northern Rivers	West Victorian	Rockingham/Kwinana
Tweed Valley	Murray Plains	Peel & South West
New England	Queensland Divisions of General Practice	Perth and Hills
Riverina	Brisbane Inner South	Great Southern WA
NSW Central West	Brisbane Southside Central	Kimberley
Dubbo Plains	Bayside	Eastern Goldfields
Barwon	Logan Area	Mid West
Murrumbidgee	Brisbane North	Greater Bunbury
Southern Highlands	Gold Coast	Pilbara
North West Slopes	Redcliffe-Bribie-Caboolture	Central Wheatbelt
Nepean	Ipswich & West Moreton	Southern Region
Blue Mountains	Toowoomba & District	Northern Tasmania
Hawkesbury	Mackay Region	North West Tasmania
General Practice Divisions of Victoria	Townsville	General Practice & Primary Health Care NT
Melbourne	Cairns	Top End
North-East Valley	Central Qld Rural	Central Australian Division of Primary Health Care
Inner Eastern Melbourne	Southern Qld Rural	Australian Capital Territory DGP
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Westgate	Far North Qld Rural	
Western Melbourne	Sunshine Coast	

The Project Team

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For further information regarding this project, please contact Julie Porritt phone (02) 6228 0820, email jporritt@adgp.com.au

List of abbreviations

ACIR	Australian Childhood Immunisation Register
ADGP	Australian Divisions of General Practice Ltd
AGPAL	Australian General Practice Accreditation Ltd
ANMC	Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council
ANF	Australian Nursing Federation
APNA	Australian Practice Nurses Association
CDM	Chronic Disease Management
CNE	Continuing Nurse Education
Division/DGP	Division of General Practice
DoHA	Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing
EN	Enrolled Nurse
EPC	Enhanced Primary Care
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
HIC	Health Insurance Commission
ICT	Integrated Care Team
MAHS	More Allied Health Services (Program)
MBS	Medicare Benefits Schedule
PIP	Practice Incentives Program
PSRNS	Practice Support Registered Nurse Service
SBO	State Based Organisation
SIP	Service Incentive Payment
SWPE	Standardised Whole Patient Equivalent
RRMA	Remote Rural Metropolitan Area
RCNA	Royal College of Nursing Australia
RACGP	Royal Australian College of General Practitioners
TAIS	Townsville Aboriginal and Islander Health Service

Introduction

The Demonstration Divisions Project aims to build on the experience in divisions of general practice (divisions) of supporting nursing in general practice and to ensure that all interested divisions are able to share in the knowledge, expertise and experience.

The Demonstration Divisions Project was funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA), and has a number of key phases:

- The Demonstration Divisions are contracted by the DoHA to:
 - Document the range of model(s) and strategies used to support nursing in general practice.
 - Share information, experience and expertise in supporting nursing in general practice with other divisions of general practice by contributing to workshops, coaching and small group peer support and other divisional engagement strategies as agreed with DoHA.
 - Identify the key issues, barriers, and enablers for further building and sustaining the capacity of divisions of general practice to promote and support nursing in general practice.
- ADGP were engaged by the DoHA to:
 - Utilise the documented models and strategies of the Demonstration Divisions to prepare a national resource kit.
 - Co-ordinate and facilitate seven national workshops to enable divisions of general practice to share the experiences and learning's of the Demonstration Divisions and other divisions; and to encourage the establishment of support networks. Plan and facilitate a feedback workshop to be attended by the Demonstration Divisions and the Department of Health and Ageing, to present and discuss the key findings of the project.
 - Identify the key issues, barriers and enablers facing divisions to support nursing in general practice in the short, medium and long term.
 - The Centre for General Practice Integration and Studies UNSW (CGPIS) was contracted by ADGP to co-facilitate the national workshops, record and analyse the information that arose at the workshops and develop a report of key findings.
 - The National Resource Kit documents the experience and knowledge of the Demonstrations Divisions in establishing and maintaining practice nurse support programs. The Kit is designed to share the knowledge, experience and resources of the Demonstration Divisions with all other divisions in order to enhance the recruitment and support of nurses in general practice.

The Kit is divided into a number of sections and shares the accounts of the Demonstration Divisions in a number of ways:

- **Section one** provides some background to the Practice Nurse Initiative, National Programs and the role of divisions in practice nurse support programs.
- **Section two** provides a brief overview of the Demonstration Divisions Projects and the key elements of support provided. Greater detail on the Demonstration Divisions projects is provided in Appendix One, with snapshots of the projects provided throughout the Kit.

- **Section three** examines the important elements in providing a practice nurse support program and discusses some of strategies used by the Demonstration Divisions in overcoming challenges and barriers to implementation and ongoing support. This section also provides some of the most frequently asked questions from the National Workshops and the responses from the Demonstration Divisions.
- **Section four** includes a number of case studies illustrating the work Demonstration Divisions in the practice setting.
- **Section five** lists some useful references and websites.
- **Section six.** Appendix one provides a detailed account of the Demonstration Divisions projects and the work they have been involved in.
- **Section seven.** Appendix Two includes the contact details for the Demonstration Division personnel. Appendix Two also lists the resources developed by the Demonstration Divisions. These resources are available free of charge to all other divisions and are either provided in hard copy in the kit; provided in electronic form on the accompanying CD; or contact details are provided to order the resource direct from the division.
- **CD-ROM.** The CD-ROM accompanying your kit contains an electronic copy of the National Resource Kit including copies of the resources provided in the Kit.

The contracts for the Demonstration Divisions have been extended until 30th June 2005. The Demonstration Divisions are available to provide support, mentoring and expertise to other divisions to assist divisions to build their capacity to support nursing in general practice. Contact details for the Demonstration Divisions are included in Appendix One.

For further information regarding the information in the National Resource Kit or for assistance with your practice nursing program please contact one of the Demonstration Divisions or Julie Porritt, Principal Advisor for Nursing in General Practice email jporritt@adgp.com.au

Nursing in General Practice: Key national priorities

Since the 2001–2002 Federal Budget announcement of \$104.3 million dollars to encourage more general practitioners to employ practice nurses, the training and support component of the Initiative has been working on 'building blocks' to underpin the capacity of general practice. The National Workshop: 'Future Directions in Practice Nursing', held in July 2001, which included over 90 people from across government, nursing and general practice, aimed to inform the implementation of the Initiative. The short-term priorities for nursing in general practice were identified from the workshop outcomes. These included:

- ensuring general practice and nursing are well informed about the Initiative
- building the capacity of divisions of general practice to work with nursing in general practice
- ensuring training and upskilling options for both nurses and general practitioners working together are available and accessible through the RCNA, (Royal College of Nursing Australia) and RACGP (Royal Australian College of General Practitioners)
- developing networks for practice nurses and effective mentoring systems
- ensuring effective evaluation to monitor and guide further development.

Projects funded by the Australian Government under these priorities include:

1 Information for general practitioners and nurses

Strategies to inform general practitioners and nurses about the Initiative include:

- *Information kits* to every general practice, State Based Organisations (SBO's), key nursing, and general practice organisations. These kits aim to support the recruitment of nurses in general practice. They provide general practitioners with the nursing perspective on key issues such as registration and employment and provide handy contact details for further information. The kits were distributed to all general practices and divisions in March 2002 and are still available from the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) website: <http://www.health.gov.au/pcd/programs/nursing/gpinfo.htm>
- *Guidelines and Application forms to access the Practice Incentive Program, (PIP)*. The Health Insurance Commission (HIC) distributed the forms and information, along with answers to common questions to all eligible practices in November 2001.
- *'Business cases'*. ADGP has developed a series of business cases, which aim to assist general practices in their assessment of the benefits and financial implications of employing a practice nurse.
- *Interactive Website*. The Australian Practice Nurses Association's (APNA) interactive website (www.apna.asn.au), is hosted by the ADGP, and has links to other useful sites, for general practitioners and nurses.

- *Consumer communication.* Recent research exploring consumer perceptions of nursing in general practice will be used to inform future communication strategies.

2 Nurses' access to training and upskilling courses

Developing the capacity of nursing to contribute to general practice relies on ensuring that appropriate educational courses are available and accessible to nurses. The RCNA and RACGP have been working together to scope the existing training and education available to practice nurses, and "map" these options against the work practice nurses currently undertake. This project has identified courses and gaps that need to be addressed in the development and training for practitioners.

The Australian Nurses' Federation (ANF) has been funded to develop competency standards for registered and enrolled nurses who work in general practice.

3 Nurses' networks and mentoring systems

Mentoring is a key factor in effective support for nursing in general practice. To ensure effective and sustainable mentoring systems, a national mentoring framework is being developed which will identify the existing mechanisms for linking practice nurses, and suggest options for addressing future needs. The mentoring options paper prepared by the Centre for Research into Nursing and Health Care, will inform the development of the framework. Extension of this project is underway which expands the concept of Mentoring to scope currently available professional support opportunities for nurses working in general practice and develop resources for the implementation of mentoring as a professional support strategy for nurses in general practice.

APNA has been funded for two years as the peak national body providing representation, support and networks for nurses in general practice at local, state and national levels.

4 Building the capacity of Divisions of General Practice

The Demonstration Divisions have been selected by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) to act as Demonstration Divisions to build the capacity of divisions of general practice to effectively support nursing in general practice. (As detailed in this Resource Kit).

DoHA has worked with each of the Demonstration Divisions to build on the existing experience in divisions of general practice in supporting practice nursing and to ensure that all divisions of general practice are able to share in this knowledge, expertise and experience.

The aim of the Demonstration Divisions project was to improve the capacity of divisions of general practice to support nursing in general practice. The Demonstration Divisions have contributed to this aim by:

- documenting the range of model(s) and strategies used to support nursing in general practice
- sharing information, experience and expertise in supporting nursing in general practice with other divisions of general practice by contributing to workshops, coaching and small group peer support and other divisional engagement strategies as agreed with DoHA

- identifying the key issues, barriers, and enablers for further building and sustaining the capacity of divisions of general practice to promote and support nursing in general practice. Coordination and support services for the Demonstration Divisions project was undertaken by the ADGP in conjunction with the Centre for General Practice Integration Studies, University of New South Wales.

The position of Principal Policy Advisor on Nursing in General Practice has been created within ADGP to develop effective linkages with practice nurse coordinators within divisions; promote the Nursing in General Practice Initiative; and to provide strategic policy advice.

Funding to enhance the role of practice nurses in the management and treatment of chronic conditions was provided to all divisions of general Practice through the Chronic Disease Management (CDM) Initiative 2001–2004.

Melbourne Division of General Practice has been provided with funding to trial with Victorian divisions a practice nurse recruitment and induction kit they have created. It is anticipated that additional funding will be provided to develop a national version of this resource.

5 Research and evaluation of the overall initiative

Research and evaluation is vital to learning from existing experience and ensuring that practice nursing is developed in a sustainable way. As nursing in general practice involves a range of stakeholders and settings, research and evaluation is likely to be complex and include a range of aspects including cost effectiveness, financial considerations, health outcomes, clinical and practice processes, collaboration and partnerships. The National Steering Committee developed an evaluation framework to inform the evaluation of the key aspects of the initiative.

An evaluation of the initiative has now been undertaken and will inform future policy direction and finances for the Nursing in General Practice Initiative.

Why do you need a general practice nurse support program?

Over the past three years divisions of general practice have had a requirement to provide support to practice nurses through the Chronic Disease Management Initiative.

Australia has an ageing population and the nature of illness and disability has dramatically shifted away from infectious diseases to chronic conditions, especially those influenced by lifestyle and behaviour (AIHW, 2002). There is an increasing demand for a wide range of health services at all levels of the health care system including general practice (AIHW, 2002).

Coupled with the increasing demand for general practice services is the current workforce shortage of general practitioners, which is predicted to worsen over the next decade (Australian Medical Workforce Advisory Committee, 2000).

Overseas and Australian literature indicates a number of benefits that nurses can bring to a practice. These include improved health outcomes in chronic disease (Wagner et.al.1996), assistance in primary-acute sector integration, better coordination of care, increased workforce capacity, the provision of practical and professional support to GPs, and an enhancement in the range of services available to people attending the practice (Watts et.al. 2004).

The divisions of general practice are a focal point in coordinating the needs of general practitioners and their practices in addressing the health of populations (Annual Survey of Divisions 2001-2002). Divisions are the best-placed organisations to play a role in supporting general practitioners in the recruitment and provision of ongoing support of practice nurses. Divisions have a knowledge and understanding of the context in which practice nursing services are provided.

What strengthening Medicare will add to practice nursing

The *Strengthening Medicare* Initiative, introduced by the Australian government in November 2003, retains grants for general practices to employ practice nurses originally announced in *A Fairer Medicare*. 457 nurses will be supported in urban areas of workforce shortage, providing services at around 800 practices, with no other conditions attached.

Strengthening Medicare adds another important initiative. It enables certain services provided by nurses working in general practice to be paid through the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) without a general practitioner needing to be present. This is expected to support an additional 1,150 full-time equivalent (FTE) practice nurses by 2007, and free up general practitioner time equivalent to 160 doctors. Through this Initiative, doctors will be able to focus on medical issues that most need their attention.

Demonstration Divisions

The eight Demonstrations Divisions or divisional consortia are:

1. Adelaide North East Division of General Practice Group, incorporating:
 - Adelaide North East Division of General Practice
 - Mid North Rural Division of General Practice
 - Yorke Peninsula Division of General Practice and
 - Northern Division of General Practice.
2. Canning Division of General Practice Group, incorporating:
 - Canning Division of General Practice
 - Perth and Hills Division of General Practice and
 - Eastern Goldfields Medical Division of General Practice
3. Fremantle Regional Division of General Practice (General Practitioner Network)
4. Hunter Urban Division of General Practice
5. Northern Tasmania Division of General Practice (GP North)
6. South East NSW Division of General Practice Group, incorporating:
 - South East NSW Division of General Practice
 - ACT Division of General Practice, and
 - Riverina Division of General Practice
7. Southern Metropolitan Region Divisions of General Practice (Melbourne) incorporating:
 - Monash Division of General Practice
 - Greater South Eastern Division of General Practice
 - Mornington Peninsula Division of General Practice
 - Dandenong and District Division of General Practice
 - Eastern Ranges Division of General Practice
 - South City Division of General Practice (GP Services), and
 - Central Bayside Division of General Practice
8. Townsville Division of General Practice

Benefits of divisional practice nurse support

Benefits for nurses include:

- Increased recognition and promotion of the general practice nurse workforce
- Increased professional development opportunities.
- Overcoming some of the professional isolation experienced by practice nurses.
- Clarification of issues relating to supervision and mentoring.
- Increased satisfaction and pride in their work.
- Greater rapport and interaction amongst local nurses.
- Opportunities for nurses to vent frustrations and problems and to seek solutions, amongst their peers and with division representatives.
- Networking and opportunities to share experiences and knowledge.
- Dissemination of information pertinent to the general practice nurse profession.
- Assistance in the implementation of the DoHA Nursing in General Practice Initiatives.
- Stronger links with the community through participation in divisional programs.
- Increased capacity for practice nurses to undertake extended roles in Chronic Disease Management and preventative/population health programs.
- The opportunity to have a collective voice through participation in Practice Nurse Networks.

Benefits for general practitioners include:

- Greater access to practice nursing services through assistance with recruitment and /or contract services.
- A well-supported nursing workforce, ensuring sustainability in an environment of projected workforce pressures for both general practitioners and nursing services over the coming years.
- Clarification or identification of the barriers and enablers related to issues of supervision, mentoring, professional development and nurse education.

- Promotion, and an increased understanding, of how practice nurses can enhance the range of general practice services offered to the community.
- Increased consumer satisfaction. Consumers like having a practice nurse available at the practice.
- Opportunities for teamwork and sharing of work loads.
- Practice nurses can attract additional income to the practice including through EPC Health Assessments, use of the new practice nurse MBS items, and assistance with procedures that attract practice incentive payments and service incentive payments.
- Practice nurses can free up the general practitioner's time to attend to other patients.
- Practice nurses bring a new skill-set to the practice from their professional training and experience.
- Having a practice nurse is a significant factor in a practice's ability to respond to change.
- A practice nurse can relieve the pressure on the general practitioner by allowing the general practitioner to delegate some of the responsibilities for follow-up of patient care to the nurse.

Benefits and opportunities for divisions include:

- Divisions are recognised as having a key role in supporting practice nursing services and are frequently consulted by outside organisations in this capacity.
- Divisions can support and drive the development of the role for practice nurses in line with the needs of general practitioners.
- The experience of some divisions in providing practice nurse programs has proved a valuable learning experience, which has been extended into structured whole-of-practice support programs.
- Division's profile and rapport with practice nurses and practice staff has improved tremendously.
- Division staff are in touch with grass roots practice nursing issues and are able to respond with tailored solutions and individual service that ensures the best outcomes.
- Stronger collaborative working relationships with other divisions.
- Increased capacity to support professional groups.
- Identification of emerging opportunities for collaborative partnerships with other organisations.
- Increased multi divisional and multi stakeholder collaboration.
- The ability to share knowledge, resources and tasks between divisions and to undertake tasks which would be beyond the capacity of individual divisions.
- Pooling of divisional expertise has increased the capacity of divisions to attract additional funding to support specific projects.

Benefits for consumers

In 2002, DoHA commissioned a study of consumer perceptions of nursing and nurses in general practice. The study explored consumer views and experiences as a means to strengthen the voice of consumers and to provide information to make health care services more responsive to consumers. Some of the key findings of the study were:

- Widespread acceptances from consumers of nursing in general practice—participants were ‘openly glowing’ of nurses.
- Nurses in general practice have the time and caring characteristics that consumers believe enables the nurse to have a significant role in providing support, health information or in assisting consumer understanding.
- Participants perceived the nurses in general practice could enhance the quality of their care.
- Consumers believed that practice nurses could assist in taking the pressure off general practitioners.
- That a united front of cooperation and respect and a team approach to care between doctor and nurse was important to the patient’s trust in the quality of the service.